

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

No. 12

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1921

Price 4d.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Owing to the repeatedly expressed wishes of our readers the date of publication of the LABOUR ORGANISER has been altered with this issue from the 15th to the 1st of the month. Such change could only be accomplished by suspending one issue. This number, therefore, is dated August-September, and we think our readers will agree that the holiday month was the most convenient for the turnover. To give full effect to the change all subscriptions or paid in advance orders, or similar arrangements for supply will be carried forward one month.

OUT OF THE RUT

IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES IN BRIEF

Quite a large number of towns and constituencies appear this year to be going in for bazaars and similar functions. This is all to the good, and the measure of the social life of the Party is also largely the measure of its activity and influence in other directions. The London Labour Fair to be held on December 2 and 3 is so far the most ambitious scheme to hand, though Derby, which is holding a three days' event, and several other places, appear to be going in for big things. A powerful committee is responsible for the London Fair, and the presidency of Mr. Arthur Henderson has been secured. The Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster, is the venue, and if all London Labour co-operates, as it should do, even that will be too small.

Passing through Watford the other day, unfortunately during the absence of the agent on holidays, it was good

to note the full use being made of the good shop window in the offices at 33 Market Street. A good sized window notice board with movable letters red on black gave prominent notice, in good taste too, of the adoption of the new Labour candidate, Mr. J. J. Mallon. In an early issue we hope to give a notice of Watford's new Labour club.

From a sample that has come into our hands of a printed card circular intended to be used as a post card, and so headed, it is obvious that the restrictions on size are not generally known. The card referred to exceeds the size laid down in the Postmaster's regulations and is liable, therefore, to surcharge as a letter. No card should exceed $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in width, nor should it be less than four inches in length by $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches in width.

We note that Mr. E. Weatherby, the Swindon Parliamentary agent, has recently given a trial to the plan of sending out enclosure envelopes to electors, the same to be called for by collectors on a second visit. We should be glad if some of our readers could give us some definite results of this method, both as to costs and actual results. Several other local Parties have experimented in this plan, though Mr. Weatherby's circular, which is well drawn and well printed, is an improvement on much of the matter circulated. The advantage of the plan under notice is, apart from its contact with the electors, the breaking-in it gives to timorous workers, who at first don't mind handing in an envelope and scuttling away promptly, and whose courage has grown by the time the second visit is due. Our own impression of the "envelope to be called for" system has been

that the results are meagre compared with the cost and trouble. Our own plan for breaking in workers is to give them first definite queries to be cleared up by calling at certain voters' houses, or definite invitations to convey to certain people, say trade unionists, to attend ward meetings. Can our readers oblige with experiences?

Mr. G. H. Howgate, the newly appointed agent at Kidderminster, who has been a regular reader of the LABOUR ORGANISER from the first, has kept a careful index of subjects—an idea worth copying by our readers—for, unlike most periodicals, our pages do not readily go out of date, and most of our matter is serviceable at all seasons.

The Editor's morning post is invariably a bulky and varied one, but an unwonted perfume of *parfum* violettes parma, and *parfum* rose, and mixtures of several others led one morning to a hasty search among the letters and to the surreptitious concealment of the all too sweet offender. Alas, 'twas not what was anticipated. Agent J. S. Price, of Cardiff East, had found a novelty, and with commendable promptitude had sent some samples on to tickle the editorial nose and send his notions wandering. The samples sent were really some enticing little invitations to join the Cardiff East Labour Party, printed on scented floral cards. They are simply sweet, and we shall hope to hear of overflowing women's sections down Cardiff way. We suggest the best way to reach the ladies might be to send them through the post to *husbands only*. Could women resist the temptation? Should our readers send to Mr. Price for samples we suggest that a small sum to Cardiff East funds might be a fair exchange for such daintiness.

The Regional Conferences of the Party are creating a considerable

amount of work for the National District Organisers—the Editor of this journal (in the Midlands) included. The secret of successful organisation lies in passing the work on—"devolution of work," an often-heard phrase in the Midlands. It has been necessary to trouble local secretaries for long lists of affiliated bodies, and all have responded nobly. But the palm must go to Mr. C. C. Jones, of Smethwick, whose humorous response—the first received—is worth printing:—

Dear Bert,—I received your letter asking for lists for use in connection with the Conference of September 3 this morning. Now, I reckon to work on Bank Holiday just to show my independence; moreover, I decline to enjoy myself in the way that Henry Dubb does. [Who is he?—Editor.] Accordingly, I am able to let you have the list by return. My motto is, "Be just in time and fear not." You may depend upon me to do my whack in making the Conference a success. With heartiest regards, trusting you are well, Yours sincerely, C. C. Jones, Secretary, Smethwick Trades and Labour Council.

While on this subject, it is appropriate to mention another instance of co-operation and promptitude. The following letter came by return after rendering account:—

Dear Editor,—Enclosed £2 6s. 3d. as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Enclosed account ...	16	8	
26 ORGANISERS per month for five months at 5s. 11d. (paid in advance rate)	1	9	7
	£2	6	3

Please acknowledge and oblige,
Yours, W. B. Hargreaves,
1 Church Street, Gainsborough.

We note that Agent Hargreaves pushes the "L.O." at every opportunity, and there is evidence that the good work is telling.

The revision period has brought us a number of samples giving evidence that the importance of the register now in process of completion is not being overlooked. Perhaps the most complete series and system that has come under our observation is that of Mr. T. Langley, the agent at Nuneaton. The interest of the local workers appears to have been sustained over a long period and constant communication kept up. Here the Party uses its own claim forms, and these were obtainable at nearly thirty centres throughout the Division.

*Do all your Local Party
officers get the*

LABOUR ORGANISER ?

If not, why?

WHOLESALE PRICES OF THE
"LABOUR ORGANISER"

Revised Prices

The attention of secretaries and others is drawn to the fact that with a view to reducing the onerous and unnecessary amount of book-keeping with small accounts *there has recently been a substantial reduction in price for wholesale orders paid in advance for three months or more.* Concurrently, an increase has been made, on credit accounts, with a view to compensating for the booking charges connected with them and to encourage cash dealings.

The new prices may be obtained on application to the Editor-Manager, Mr. H. Drinkwater, Whittington, near Worcester.

REGISTRATION PROBLEMS

*A famous consulting expert at the service
of LABOUR ORGANISER readers*

We have pleasure in announcing an extension of the facilities at present afforded by the LABOUR ORGANISER for reply to queries of a technical nature bearing on Registration and Electoral Law.

In future readers desiring a prompt postal reply to their queries should fill in the coupon below and post same to the Editor. Sixpence in stamps should be enclosed to cover postages. No postage is required on queries to be answered through our columns.

Coincident with this arrangement we are also able to announce that the LABOUR ORGANISER has secured the kind co-operation of a well-known authority and consultant in registration matters, to whom in future matters of extreme doubt or highly technical elucidation will be referred for an opinion. We can assure our readers that the service now offered (and rendered gratis to the LABOUR ORGANISER as a compliment to its efficiency) cannot be surpassed. Our referee is in the front rank of authorities on the questions concerned.

COUPON

Name.....

Address

.....

What Labour Party are you a
member of

Date.....September, 1921

THE SECRETARY'S PAGE

Help and Hints in Season

One of the most unfortunate discoveries I have made is the extent to which most secretaries are ignorant of official events in the Party and of the proceedings of the Executive Committee and annual conference. After all, there are few things more important, or that contribute so much to the qualification of the successful secretary and local organiser, as a knowledge of Party doings and an insight into the tendencies and policies that sway the national movement. Of later years there has been much encouragement to be derived therefrom, and the forms and procedure are themselves worth studying as illustrating the distinct characteristics of the Labour Party, and further, as an example, in some directions, of the best working of that peculiar blend of collectivist power and individual effort that distinguishes the structure of the Party, and which, reflected in the Party's local constitution, and rightly appreciated and acted upon, undoubtedly can create a political machine more potently powerful than is possible to any other Party.

Secretaries would do well to try and remedy any deficiencies they may have in the direction above indicated. How many have not read the Party Executive Committee's report given at Brighton? Yet this report every year simply teems with information of first-rate importance concerning the activities, personnel, organisation, and development of both the national and international movement. Following this the annual report of the Party (for which orders may be given now) contains not only the report mentioned, but the discussions and decisions of conference, and various references that are indispensable from time to time.

It is not expected, of course, that secretaries will necessarily wade through even the brief summaries of the weary speeches of tireless delegates; but conference resolutions are all-important. It is not the Executive of the Party which lays down Party policy or even always gives it the lead. Unlike the Liberal and Tory Parties, where the docile herd await the portentous pronouncement of a "leader" before they can form an opinion or create a cause, the British Labour Party affords in the evolution of its programme and pronouncements one of the most striking successes in democracy the world has seen. Spontaneously, again and again, year after year, out of the ranks of the conference have sprung resolutions that have crystallised and shaped the policy of the Party and contributed to its programme. It is, therefore, more than necessary that reports should be noted, and that local officers should be ready too to help their own organisation to function in its national sphere as well as in its local one.

Now is the time when calendars for the New Year should be considered. Though it is late in the day to be commending last year's issues, two samples of 1921 calendars worth mention have reached us this month. A delightfully tasteful one comes from the Ilkeston Division of Derbyshire, printed by our Labour friend Mr. W. Barker, Printer, Mansfield Road, Heanor. It is really one of the nicest letterpress productions that have reached us. The Kennington Labour Party were responsible for a plainer production, evidently intended for a very wide distribution. Harry Gosling's photo is well produced, and we can well understand that a plain serviceable calendar with an effective photo, got into most homes, might do even more effective good than a more elaborate one on artistic lines.

The Local Party calendar is certainly a thing always worth doing and is a constant reminder in the home. This year there are special reasons for ordering early, so as to avoid any conceivable exercise of mind as to whether the expense could be confused with possible election expenses. We note that Messrs. Cheshire, of Kidderminster, have recently sent out some admirable samples of calendars with the photos of Labour leaders, which can be localised to suit requirements.

A matter of some importance to secretaries is the general fall in prices of stationery and requisites. Generally speaking, the stationery trade very readily give their customers the benefit of reductions in prices, and except for the little-called-for and slower articles of sale, the policy is not pursued, so often met with to-day in certain retail trades, of still trying to pass off on unwary customers articles at boom prices. The price of printing ought soon to come down. Anyway, those responsible for giving out repeat orders for supplies ordered during the boom ought to be careful now to get new estimates and samples. Labour should not do this for the purpose of necessarily patronising the lowest tender, but it is at any rate entitled to the benefit of reductions in material (and other reductions that are imminent)—which advantage it may not get unless looked for.

By the time this issue reaches our readers programmes for the winter will be well under consideration. Will the children be forgotten? We hope not. At least some sustained sort of effort for and with the kiddies ought to be attempted. And the Party which doesn't have its children's Christmas party doesn't understand our creed, or "humanness," indulgence in which eases the weariness of conflict and fits one better for the cause. We hope all Parties will remember the children. When the

winter children's parties are here a copy of "A Letter to Santa Claus" (by your Editor), with its now famous bum-bum-bumming chorus, will be gladly sent to readers applying for same, in the hope that practice may make perfect someone who will attempt to impart to the youngsters the ecstasy and excitement that this piece arouses. Meantime get on with job of arranging.

OUR POSTER COMPETITION

The Deferred Awards

We have pleasure in announcing the names of the prize-winners in the two classes of our recent poster competition, which were thrown open to further entries.

In the class for the best design suitable for reproduction the prize has again been won by our friend Mr. T. Summerbell, Printer, 10 Green Street, Sunderland, and the sum of £5 has accordingly been forwarded to that gentleman.

The class for the best displayed meeting bill or poster produced a number of entries, but we regret that the general merit was by no means high. The prize of £2 10s., offered in this class has been awarded to Mr. W. W. Borrett, of the Blackfriars Press, Albion Street, Leicester. We have to congratulate the Blackfriars Press on some excellent poster work, displaying both an excellent sense of proportion and balance and an admirable choice of letter, with obviously considerable capacity of machinery to produce this line of work.

In the latter class also it was decided that honourable mention should be given to Mr. W. Hargreaves, 1 Church Street, Leicester, for a well-designed series of posters sent in by him. Originality and tastefulness were combined in the designs, and with less matter and more modern characters (neither probably the fault of the entrant) these would have carried off a prize.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER NEWS

Our readers are requested to note the following additions and corrections to the interesting list published in our last issue of Local Labour Newspapers.

The Labour Pioneer (incorporating the *Yorkshire Factory Times*). Address: Yorkshire Factory Times Printing Department, Cheapside, Heckmondwike. Weekly 1d. We regret the omission of this famous and flourishing journal.

Bradford Pioneer. Corrected address: 17 Little Horton Lane, Bradford.

East End Pioneer. Corrected address: 638 Commercial Road, E. 14. Published jointly by the Limehouse and Mile End Divisional Labour Parties.

Leeds Weekly Citizen. Address: 14 Upper Fountain Street, Leeds. Weekly, 1½d. Not localised as stated.

South Leeds Citizen. Address: 9 Grove Hall Drive, Leeds. Monthly, gratis.

Sheffield Journal. Corrected address: 63 Blonk Street, Sheffield. Monthly, 1d.

King's Lynn Citizen. Address: 7 Paradise Parade, King's Lynn. Monthly, 1d. First issue September 1.

Several Divisional Labour Parties in Lancashire are considering in co-operation a scheme for the establishment of a paper in their area. Mr. Frank H. Edwards, the Bury agent, has been busy in this movement, and wisely circularised the whole of the present Labour press for information and suggestions. We heartily wish success to the new venture when started and take this opportunity of hoping that our established journals will not hesitate to extend the helping hand with advice and information when called upon. It is quite true that the more successful papers we have, the greater will be the influence and success of each. Think that out; it will take some disproving.

The *King's Lynn Citizen*, the first issue of which is to be published to-day, is to be four crown folio size pages, and while printed at the Blackfriars Press (colloquially the Leicester Labour Press) is not one of the syndicated series. On the other hand *The Dawn* of Swindon, the first bright issue of which has reached us, dated August, is *Audacity*, mentioned in our last issue, under a new name, with, of course, its localised matter. It is quite cheering to see our friends thus keeping things humming. Are there any more newcomers?

It is interesting to learn that the scheme for a chain of London Labour papers, in which Mr. Herbert Morrison has taken a lead, is developing. We gather that an announcement may be made in September and that a scheme of eight page papers is being aimed at. The Publicity Department of the Party are also being consulted.

Street-selling of Labour newspapers is by no means so much in fashion as it might. By this, is not meant the pushing of sales in the street by willing members of the Party, but the regular sale on publishing day of the paper hot (or should that be wet) from the press by regular vendors. A little business acumen will show that at first it will pay to be at a considerable loss over this, but if an attractive paper is put out, with sufficient in it to interest the man in the street, the latter will eventually justify you by his custom.

The Labour News the title of the *Labour News Service* in its remodelled and adaptable form, is a definite and sound business proposition to those Parties who look for Headquarters help in establishing a local paper. Its crown pages are now "newsily" set out. Its flat size is double-crown, leaving the whole of one side (two crown sheets) for local printing. Considering that it is supplied for bare cost of paper and running-off,

Labour Agents, Get ready to address your

ENVELOPES

from the Autumn Register—the Register on which will possibly be fought the next General :

Parliamentary Election

The PIONEER PRESS Ltd.

3 New Road, Woolwich, S.E. 18

has placed with makers an order for

1,000,000 ENVELOPES

made to size to meet postal requirements for election free delivery.

The envelope will take a quarto
: Election Address 4 fold. :

**SPECIAL ENVELOPE
for LABOUR AGENTS**

**SPECIAL PRICE
to LABOUR AGENTS**

Send a post card for particulars to-day to

The PIONEER PRESS Ltd.

3 New Road, Woolwich, S.E. 18

and that the cost of editing, setting-up, &c., is borne by Headquarters, it does offer a substantial contribution towards reduction of prime costs. Those constituencies who have got no paper at all, and who cannot even accept this proposition, will be in a poor way if unable to accept the alternative proposition of buying at least some copies weekly (as low as fifty at 2s. 4d. may be obtained) for the purpose of distribution, or even sale, in promising quarters. We suggest that 100 waverers presented each week with a copy would soon produce a fine crop of new converts. If your organisation is worth anything you should know 100 persons "on the hover."

FUTURE JURY LISTS

New Method to be Employed in their Compilation

Economy as the result of the introduction of new methods in the preparation of jury lists in England and Wales in the future is foreshadowed in the Juries Bill introduced by the Home Secretary.

Under the new Bill separate jury lists will no longer be prepared and printed, and, instead, the names of persons qualified as jurors will be indicated in the register of electors by means of a special mark and the jurors' book in each county will be made up from the appropriate registers.

The Bill will apply to the cities for which separate commissions of assize are issued and will thus remove the difficulties which were temporarily met by means of the Jury (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1920, and the Renewal Act of the present session.

There are at the present time certain small classes of persons who are qualified to be jurors though they are not entitled to the franchise. Under the proposals of the Bill these persons will cease to be qualified as jurors.

TIPS FOR THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Don't begin the general canvass too soon. It is so easy to exhaust your workers and assume all is sunshine because you get a good canvass when nobody else is on the job to oppose you. The fresh forces of the enemy coming on later will knock spots off your favourable canvass of to-day. Store some energy for later on.

By all means canvass now, but *canvass for workers* on your list of people who, while not at present active in the Party, have some connection with it, such as co-operators, trade unionists, &c. It will pay to visit as many of these as possible. The method and result is altogether different to a raw canvass of an (as yet) uninterested electorate.

Ware the economy stunt. Be prepared to point out how high rates are due to increased national burdens placed on local shoulders (where the burden already bears unequally) in order to cover up increased national expenditure and wicked waste on Chauvinist foreign ventures, and plunder of national funds at home.

Insist on all candidates for your borough making common cause—There is only one Labour "platform."

Have nothing to do with "arrangements" for buying off opposition. Labour thrives on fighting, and a few jelly-bags admitted on sufferance to the Council is a poor reward for your efforts to build a Party that would win against all comers. Besides it is rank betrayal of Labour's Cause.

Get the candidates together now to talk over points. Let them meet with councillors already elected and obtain an insight into the duties. This will help them, particularly if they have to challenge retiring councillors. Get ready to bring your women's sections into action. Send a deputation from your Party Executive Committee to discuss plans with them. This will please the Sections and produce more suggestions and enthusiasm.

Try to arrange now different dates for all regular meetings falling in the last fortnight of the contest.

Writing as far as possible should be done now. It is better that a few should *not* undertake this and rush it through at express rate. It is more helpful and conducive to wider interest to have occasional Party writing nights with preparations for quite a number of scribblers. The worst writers can be given other jobs to do. Remember the register will not be available till early in October, and this fact will hold you up from certain writing.

Have you any prominent notice-boards belonging to your Party in parts of your borough? If not, it will pay you to get some.

Book up speakers now for such meetings, indoor or outdoor, as are decided upon. Also consider your accommodation for out-door work. Get a decent platform of some kind. Lanterns may also be necessary.

Remember that at the coming elections Labour is likely to do well throughout the country. Remember that a special significance will attach to this year's elections. Don't let your town be an exception to the rule.

HAVE YOU GOT THAT COMMITTEE ROOM?

Many local organisations, particularly in county constituencies, are likely to experience difficulties over the renting of suitable committee rooms. In some places adequate accommodation cannot be obtained for love or money, and when the election arrives officials will be at their wits' end for want of rooms in which to concentrate local effort, do necessary clerical work, and conduct the campaign.

This is a difficulty that should be faced *at once*. It is simply mad folly to leave to an election agent appointed at the last minute the big task of finding rooms. Work is disorganised,

and if rooms are at last obtained it will be at an exorbitant figure, while it is even more likely the campaign will be crippled and stunted by lack of accommodation. The candidate's prospects will assuredly suffer.

We strongly advise local Parties who have exhausted all efforts to get an option on suitable premises, or to provide their own, to consider the purchase of a small hut, or several, which may be erected on odd pieces of rented land, or even in members' gardens. There has recently been a considerable reduction in the price of ready-to-erect wood buildings, consequent on a general lowering of imported timber prices. Small hutments quite complete with windows, floor, and door, and quite big enough for a country sub-agent, can be obtained for about £15, while larger and of course more desirable erections range in many sizes and prices from £15 to £75, some of the larger being big enough for public meetings. Prices at the present time are really quite reasonable, and in many villages there is sufficient enthusiasm to purchase such a building without recourse to central or election funds. Divisional Parties would do well to consider at their next meeting the plan on which their Division will be fought, and to refer this question of accommodation to local consideration and report, with suggestions on the plan above mentioned. In most rural parts recently purchased erections are to be seen adapted for all uses, and a few copies spent in gardening, small holders, or motoring journals will secure several merchants' addresses for inquiry purposes.

"THE CASE FOR THE LABOUR PARTY" (excellent reviews). Pamphlet by A. J. WILLIAMS (Parliamentary Candidate, Cardiff East) and J. S. PRICE (Parly. Agent). Post free, one, 3d., dozen, 1s. 6d., twelve dozen, 15s., &c., from Publishers, Labour Hall, Stacey Road, Cardiff.

HOME OFFICE POWERS

An Interesting List

Many of our readers will be glad to have by them a summary of the powers respecting electoral arrangements and similar matters possessed by the Home Office and transferred to them by the Ministry of Health (formerly the Local Government Board). We reprint below a useful summary together with the authority by which the power is conferred.

Local Government Act, 1888.

Section 54 (1) (e).

Local Government Act, 1894.

Section 3 (6) and Section 48 (2).

Section 20 (5) and Section 48 (2).

Section 23 (5) and Section 48 (2).

Section 24 (4) and Section 48 (2).

Section 31 (1) as amended by Section 2 (5) of the London Government Act, 1899.

London Government Act, 1899.

Section 26 (1) and (2).

Representation of the People Act, 1918.

Section 12 (2).

Section 12 (3).

Section 13 (1).

Section 15 (1).

Section 15 (2).

To make Orders altering the boundary of any electoral divisions of a county or of the number of county councillors and electoral divisions in a county.

To frame rules for the election of parish councillors.

To frame rules for the election of guardians.

To frame rules for the election of urban district councillors.

To frame rules for the election of rural district councillors.

To frame rules for the election of metropolitan borough councillors.

To make Orders for the alteration of the number of wards for a metropolitan borough, or of the boundaries of any ward, or of the apportionment of the members of the ward.

To make Orders with regard to the Registration Officer in cases where the registration area is not co-terminous with or wholly contained in one administrative county or municipal borough.

To approve deputy of Registration Officer.

To give general or special directions with respect to arrangements made by Registration Officer for carrying out his duties as to registration.

To direct amount of contributions towards expenses of Registration Officer by the council of any county or borough other than the council whose clerk the Registration Officer is or by whom he is appointed.

To determine any question arising whether certain expenses incurred by the Registration Officer have been properly incurred.

Representation of the People Act, 1918.

Section 18 (*d*).

Section 28 (4).

Section 30.

Section 31 (2).

Section 46 (3).

First Schedule, paragraph (18).

Sixth Schedule, paragraph (7).

Ninth Schedule, paragraph (5).

To determine in certain cases questions relating to the compensation payable to existing officers.

To designate the Returning Officer in certain cases.

To approve appointment of deputy for Acting Returning Officer.

To alter, or direct alteration of, division of constituency into polling districts and appointment of polling places.

To make Orders for the removing of difficulties as to the preparation of the register or the holding of elections.

To render assistance required by Admiralty, Army Council, or Air Ministry in conveying information to Registration Officer.

To make adaptations in the provisions of any Act, &c., for the purpose of making those provisions conform with the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1918.

To determine doubts as to the constituency in which any Parish is intended by the Schedule to be included.

A COMBINED RENT BOOK & GUIDE

to the RENTS ACT, 1920

by T. I. MARDY JONES, F.R.E.S.

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Daily Herald review :—

“Mardy Jones has produced a book which makes cheating by landlord or rent-collector impossible. Once seen, they will certainly sell. It lasts three years from date first used.”

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All orders for 5 dozen or over at 4s. a dozen, post free with a two colour Display Poster. Three months credit. Over 20,000 already in use. Adopted as their Official Rent Book by many Local Authorities. ORDER now. From the Author, 16 LLANTWIT RD., PONTYPRIDD, GLAM.

HOW WE OBTAINED AN IMPROVED REGISTER

By J. FRANCIS,

Parliamentary Agent, Widnes Division

The discussion at the recent annual conference of the Agents' Association on such subjects as the compilation of the register, the provision of adequate polling places, out-voters' lists, &c., has led me to think that I might with advantage to other agents give an account of our experiences in the Widnes division.

When the by-election in the Widnes division was fought in August, 1919, the register of electors for the rural polling districts was printed in alphabetical order.

The result was that electors with different surnames, although resident in the same street or even in the same house, were to be found scattered in different parts of the register. One instance I may quote was that of a householder with three male lodgers resident with him, all of different surnames, necessitating entries in four different parts of the register.

The task of preparing and maintaining the register in anything like an efficient manner was exceedingly difficult and was further complicated by the absence in many districts of any distinctive names or numbers of the houses. The work of preparing canvass cards and writing of envelopes, not to speak of the actual canvassing of electors, is more easily imagined than described. We therefore determined to approach the County Registration Officer and to ask him to issue instructions for the entire register to be compiled in street or road order, and believing that a personal interview would be more successful than correspondence we sought and obtained an appointment at the county offices. There we were able to deal with the chief clerk in the registration department, to whom we presented our case for a re-compilation of the register,

additional polling places, and re-arrangement of ward boundaries.

On the first point he informed us that the printing of the register was done on a five yearly contract which had three years to run, and as the alteration in the compilation would be a variation of the contract, causing additional expense, he did not think the Parliamentary Committee would agree.

With regard to our request that one of the polling districts should be divided into two and an additional polling place provided, he expressed himself as satisfied with the reasons we advanced and, after consultation with the county councillor for that area, said that in all probability our request would be agreed to, as would also our suggested line of demarcation.

Our third point was one which, if agreed to, involved the alteration of the boundary line dividing two wards constituting a polling district. The old boundary line—the main road—cut the village into halves, one half being in No. 1 ward, and the other in No. 2 ward.

The anomaly lay in the fact that the polling place in No. 1 ward was right on the main road—the dividing line—while the polling place in No. 2 ward was two and a quarter miles away, the result being that half the electors in the village had only a few yards to go to record their votes while the other half had to travel two and a quarter miles.

As the polling place in No. 2 was convenient for other electors outside the village our only remedy was the readjustment of the boundary line. We were told that it would be better for us to secure the passing of a resolution by the parish council asking for the readjustment to be made, and that on receipt of such a resolution the County Council would hold a public inquiry in the village.

We accordingly secured the adoption of such a resolution, having enlisted the support of the chairman and the

clerk of the parish council beforehand. Later on the county council advertised by public notice that an inquiry would be held, thus giving an opportunity to supporters or opponents of the proposal to attend.

When the inquiry was held, however, no opposition was raised and the court unanimously agreed to recommend the acceptance of our proposal. This was subsequently confirmed by the county council and notified publicly.

Our next point was one almost similar to the foregoing, the difference being that the boundaries were parish and not ward boundaries. In three parishes a large number of electors were situated much nearer to the polling place in the adjacent parish than to the polling place in their own parish.

Acting on a suggestion from the county official, we proceeded, in co-operation with the assistant overseers of the parishes concerned, to construct lists of voters who while having their franchise qualification in the parish in which they resided would be very much inconvenienced by being allowed to vote at the nearest polling place in the adjacent parish.

These lists were placed before the deputy registration officer for the division at the subsequent registration court, when he at once questioned whether he had power to consent to their adoption, pointing out that Rule 24, R.P.A., did not apply. This we admitted, but we argued that the law clearly intended that there should be provided such facilities as are reasonable to all electors to enable them to vote and that our lists should be so regarded.

Subsequently he agreed, and the lists were printed as part of the register, the names of all "outvoters" being "starred" in the lists for the parishes in which they reside, and a special list is now printed, containing their names and addresses, for attachment to the lists of the parish in which they will vote.

In the meantime we had not been content to accept the argument of expense in the matter of our suggested re-arrangement of the lists to street order, and we approached certain members of the Parliamentary Committee resident in the division and, after a full explanation, we secured their support, with the result that, when the matter came before the committee, it was agreed that the change should be made. When writing to acquaint us of the decision the clerk to the county council informed us that the alteration had been sanctioned "because of the exceptional circumstances obtaining in the Widnes division." What those exceptional circumstances are I know not; so far as my knowledge goes Widnes division, in these respects, is like every other county division.

In any case, we secured all we asked for, not without a good deal of trouble and of persistent effort accompanied by tact, and doubtless our provision of the necessary maps, with polling places well defined, with corresponding facility of reference to the registers of the polling districts, helped us very considerably.

"DON'T ARGUE"

An Echo of Heywood

While not fully endorsing every word of advice given in the following "Hints to Canvassers," we nevertheless have pleasure in reproducing same both for the reason that they come from the pen of our much-respected colleague Councillor S. Hague, J.P., of Gorton, and that it was under his direction and upon this advice that the canvass in the recent successful Heywood contest was carried out. Generally speaking the advice is sound, though its efficacy depends upon whether the principle has before been recognised that elections are won before and not after the issue of the writs. Given a virgin green constituency, and

workers to go round, argument is helpful and necessary. The trouble is always with one's "argufiers."

Hints to Canvassers

(1) Converts are made by literature, attendance at meetings, conversations in workshops, &c., but seldom on the doorstep at election times.

(2) Always carry literature and meetings bills. Urge electors to read the literature and to attend the meetings.

(3) Find your man, or woman, and ask boldly if we can depend on his or her support for Mr. Halls. If yes, express thanks, register the promise, and pass quickly to the next door. If no, express regret, but *don't beg or argue*. Urge the voter to read literature and come to hear our candidate. Register the adverse pledge and pass on. If not decided, leave literature, urge him to attend meetings, say we may see him again if time permits. But don't argue. Register him doubtful and pass on to the next door.

(4) If you find yourself in a hot-bed of opposition don't be discouraged. Still keep cheery and courteous. Remember this little spot is not the whole of the division. If they are heavily against us register the fact faithfully, leave literature and meeting bills, but don't argue.

(5) Lies will be told against our candidate or our Party—they always are. Don't stop to disprove. Assure the voter these lies are only mis-statements and that they indicate fear on the part of our opponents, leave literature and urge attendance at meetings, but—don't argue. You should of course report any false statement to the agent and if worth while note who said it and if possible in the precise words used.

(6) To make a thorough canvass we should get round three times; second and third visits to voters who were previously "out" or "doubtful." If you stay to persuade we cannot get once round the division. Therefore, our final word to canvassers is—*never argue*.

AGENTS' ASSOCIATION NEWS

New appointments, not previously announced in the LABOUR ORGANISER, are: Mr. J. Wynne, Carlisle; Mr. C. A. Millman, Penryn and Falmouth; Mr. W. Stewart Rainbird, East Ham; Mr. J. Wynne, Carlisle; Mr. G. H. Howgate, Kidderminster; Mr. H. N. St. Dunstan White, Warwick and Leamington; Mr. Allan Young, Farnham; Mr. E. C. Fairchild, Walthamstow; and Mr. F. J. Kettle (part time), Hanley.

Appointments are now pending in Cirencester and Tewkesbury, Leicester South, Sheffield (Park Division), Sheffield (Attercliffe Division), High Peak (Derbyshire), Stalybridge and Hyde, and in Birmingham (Yardley Division). Appointments in other recent vacancies had not been finally completed at time of going to press.

The East Midland agents have decided to hold their first annual dinner at an early date, the function to take place at Derby. A red-letter day event is in contemplation.

At the last meeting of the London District a very able address on publicity and advertising was given by Mr. R. T. Lang. The meeting was a success and considerable interest was evidenced in the subject. A display of Party posters, as exhibited at the Brighton Conference, also added to the usefulness of the proceedings.

Steps are being taken to bring before the newly elected Executive of the Association the question of remission of contributions to agents in mining constituencies who forfeited their salaries during the recent mining dispute. The question of the Party inquiry into agents' security of tenure, &c., is also to be discussed.

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REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS

By C. G. E. FLETCHER, C.B.E.,
Barrister-at-Law, Town Clerk of
Islington

Being the substance of a lecture delivered at Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., April 16, 1920, to the London Students' Society of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants (Incorporated).

(Continued)

The word *occupying* requires careful consideration, so also do the words *owner* or *tenant*, because you will observe that a person must occupy as *owner* or *tenant* for the purpose of the local government qualification. In this connection I would remind you that the words *owner* or *tenant* do not occur in Section 1, relating to the business premises qualification for the purpose of the parliamentary franchise. That qualification is based solely upon occupation. I think the word "occupy" has the same meaning in both Sections 1 and 3. And as a definition of the word in relation to the parliamentary franchise you might remember that it is an actual exercise of the rights of the owner in possession during the requisite time.

As regards Section 3, with which we are now dealing, it is essential that to be a local government elector a person must occupy land or premises as "owner or tenant." The owner is a person who has a freehold estate, whether legal or equitable, in the land or premises in question, as distinguished from a person having a less estate. On the other hand a tenant is a person, not the owner, who has some estate, whether legal or equitable, in the subject-matter of occupation, but we must always remember that this section expressly provides that the word "tenant" shall include a person who occupies a room or rooms as a lodger only where such room or rooms are let to him in an unfurnished state. So we find that a lodger who satisfies the requirements of this section is deemed to be a tenant, and, if otherwise qualified, is entitled to be registered as

a local government elector. I need not enter fully into the question of what is a lodger. It was much discussed in the well-known case of *Bradley v. Bayliss* in the year 1881, and in two other cases which were governed by the judgment delivered in that case. The chief difference between a tenant and a lodger can, I think, be expressed by stating that as regards a lodger there must be in all cases a contract creating a personal relation between the landlord and the lodger, without passing any right to property in the premises to the lodger. A lodger has no estate, either legal or equitable, and in law his right is limited to damages against the landlord should he unlawfully turn him out, for he could not recover possession.

As regards a lodger, we may therefore say that the essential thing is "a purely personal contractual right exercised for a stated period in a stated manner over immovable property belonging to the other party to the contract," and this constitutes the distinguishing feature of the lodger's qualification for the purpose of this section.

We must now consider *Section 4* of the Act, relating to franchises (women).

This is an entirely new feature of the Act, for the Act created the qualification for a woman to be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector. As regards age, it is essential that she should have attained the age of thirty years, and not be subject to any legal incapacity.

I have already dealt with the question of age, and legal incapacity, and, therefore, need say nothing more now as to this requirement, except that the age of thirty years must be substituted for that of twenty-one years or the term "full age." The important point to remember is that in order to be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector a woman must be "entitled to be registered as a local government elector in respect of the occupation in that constituency of land or premises (not being a dwelling

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house) of a yearly value of not less than £5, or of a dwelling house, or is the wife of a husband entitled to be so registered."

There is, you will notice, a difference between the conditions which have to be satisfied for the purpose of the parliamentary franchise in the case of a man and in the case of a woman, quite apart from that of age. In the case of a man the parliamentary qualification (other than for a university constituency), as I have already pointed out, rests upon a twofold basis, viz., (a) the residence qualification, (b) the business premises qualification, and is distinct from the local government franchise. While in the case of a woman, in order to obtain a parliamentary qualification, she must be entitled to be registered as a local government elector in the manner stated, or be the wife of a husband entitled to be so registered.

Sub-section (2) states the ground upon which a woman shall be entitled to be registered for a university constituency, and Sub-section (3) the condition upon which a woman shall be entitled to be registered as a local government elector for any local government electoral area. It is therefore necessary first to examine the sets of conditions either one of which must be satisfied before a woman can be entitled to be registered as a local government elector.

As regards the local government qualifications, a woman, if otherwise qualified, is entitled on the ground of age if she is twenty-one years of age. The occupation required in the case of women is the same as that required in the case of a man, i.e., occupation of land or premises as *owner or tenant*, or as a lodger in a room or rooms let unfurnished. There is a question of value in respect of the subject matter of the qualification, but it is immaterial as to the sort of premises, provided that it is at least of the yearly value of £5. There is a difficulty as to the meaning of the term "dwelling house" in this section, and we need to look

again at the interpretation section, viz., Section 41 (8), where we find it stated that the expression "dwelling house" includes any part of a house where that part is occupied separately as a dwelling house.

I may mention that Section 5 of the Parliamentary and Municipal Registration Act, 1878, has been repealed. And so we no longer have the enactment for the purposes of the Registration Acts that "where an occupier is entitled to the sole and exclusive use of any part of a house, that part shall not be deemed to be occupied otherwise than separately by reason only that the occupier is entitled to the joint use of some other part."

With regard to the other qualification, viz., that of being the wife of a man qualified to be a local government elector, I would only point out that it does not seem to be a condition precedent that the husband should actually be registered, for the words of the section are "if he is entitled to be registered."

You will observe in Section 4 (1) that the words used are "in that constituency." Questions have been raised as to the interpretation of the expression, and I think it presents some difficulty. Although the matter is not free from doubt, my opinion is that the words must be interpreted strictly, i.e., that they have the effect of limiting the area within which the subject matter of the qualification might be for the whole of the qualifying period in order that a woman may be qualified for the parliamentary franchise.

Section 5 of the Act contains special provision for persons serving on war service. I only have time to refer to the fact that doubts have been expressed as to the position of naval or military voters on demobilisation, for you will remember that the Act specially provided in view of the European war that was then in progress—that "a male naval or military voter who has served, or hereafter serves in, or in connection with the

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present war shall, notwithstanding anything in this or any other Act, be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector, if that voter at the commencement of service had attained, or during service attains, the age of nineteen years and is otherwise qualified." Doubt has been expressed as to whether a person qualified as naval or military voter who ceases to serve, and being under the age of twenty-one years, continues to be eligible for registration as an elector if still under the age of twenty-one years. I do not think the difficulty is as formidable as has been represented. My own view is that the section will bear the interpretation that there is a saving for such persons if over nineteen years of age, although they may not have attained the age of twenty-one years.*

Section 6 of the Act deals with the qualifying period, which ordinarily shall be a period of six months ending on January 15 and on July 15 each year, including in each case the fifteenth day. The Local Government Board, and subsequently the Ministry of Health, have, however, under statutory authority made special provision for qualifying periods, for, as you know, the Ministry can continue so to do for a period of twelve months after the war. The subject is under consideration now as to what shall be the qualifying period for the future, and I think it is probable that legislation will be promoted to effect a change in the Act in that respect.

A point of interest to mention is the fact that with regard to a person who is a naval or military voter, or who has been serving as a member of the forces of the Crown, and has ceased so to serve, one month is substituted for six months as the qualifying period.

I turn now to Section 7 of the Act which deals with supplementary provisions as to residence and occupation.

I have already referred to sub-sections (a) and (b) in discussing with

you the provisions of Section 1. In the case of (a) the joint occupation of two or more persons of business premises, you will notice the requirement that the value for a qualification must be not less than the annual value of £10. And in the case of (b) the occupation of land or premises (not being a dwelling house) for the purpose of the parliamentary franchise of women, the requisite annual value of each joint occupier must not be less than £5. The provisions of both (a) and (b) are subject to the condition that "not more than two joint occupiers shall be entitled to be registered in respect of the same land or premises, unless they are *bona fide* engaged as partners carrying on their profession, trade, or business on the land or premises."

Sub-section (2) enacts a saving for interrupted residence, as to which I have already called attention. And in connection with the provisions of this section you must not overlook the express enactment in sub-section (3) relating to parliamentary electors. "Notwithstanding anything in this Act, a man shall not be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector for a constituency in respect of a residence qualification, though he may have been residing in premises in the constituency on the last day of the qualifying period, if he commenced to reside in the constituency within thirty days before the end of the qualifying period, and ceased to reside within thirty days after the time when he so commenced to reside."

(To be continued)

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT, 1921

The New Act for Defence Force Men

We print below the text of the new Act which, as intimated in our last issue, was to be passed for the purpose principally of clearing up the position of Defence Force men, and others.

* The Representation of the People Act, 1920, confirmed the view expressed above.

The royal assent has now been given, and the Act came immediately into force :—

I.—(1) The residence of a person in any premises shall not be deemed to have been interrupted for the purposes of the Representation of the People Acts, 1918 to 1920, by reason only of the fact that that person has been absent from the premises during part of the qualifying period, not exceeding four months at any one time, in the performance of any duty arising from or incidental to any office, service, or employment held or undertaken by him; but the express enactment of this provision shall not affect in any way the general principles governing the interpretation of the expression "residence" and cognate expressions.

(2) Section 3 of the Police Disabilities Removal Act, 1887, is hereby repealed.

II.—This Act may be cited as the Representation of the People Act, 1921, and the Representation of the People Acts, 1918 to 1920, and this Act may be cited together as the Representation of the People Acts, 1918 to 1921.

FREE COPIES OF THE ABSENT VOTERS' LIST

New Instructions to Registration Officers

In the past, some agents have found difficulties in that registration officers have not deemed the absent voters' list as part of the register, and so to be supplied to Parliamentary agents. This was the actual experience of the editor of this journal during a certain

by-election. The issue therefore, by the Home Office, of the following instruction, dated August 10, is of peculiar importance, and should be duly noted :—

SUPPLY OF ABSENT VOTERS' LIST TO PARTY AGENTS AS PART OF REGISTER

In pursuance of the arrangement referred to under Heading No. 10 in the circular of December 8, 1919, R.P. 93, the recognised agent of each political organisation is supplied with two copies of the register immediately after publication. In some cases it has been the practice to supply to the agent copies of the absent voters' list as being part of the register, and the Secretary of State considers that, in all cases, the agent may properly be furnished with copies of the absent voters' list.

" Their pennons gaily streaming flutter in the breeze "

About 500 children and 250 adults attended the first annual outing of the Cardiff East Labour Party, organised by John S. Price, Divisional Agent. A procession, headed by the Party's own brass and reed band, and by the Party banner, proceeded from the Labour Hall, Stacey Road, to the grounds, and was fully representative of men's and women's sections, I.L.P., trade unionists, Young Labour League, co-operators, athletic clubs, unemployed, and colliers, and children of members. The events included comedy auction, fine arts gallery, sports, games, punch and judy, football kicking, have a shot, character reading, &c., &c. Among those present were Arthur J. Williams, N.U.R., prospective Parliamentary candidate, and Mrs. Williams. A report in the *Herald* having initiated a number of inquiries for particulars, any of our readers who desire further information should write, enclosing stamped addressed envelope, to J. S. Price, Cardiff East Labour Party Offices, Labour Hall, Stacey Road, Cardiff.

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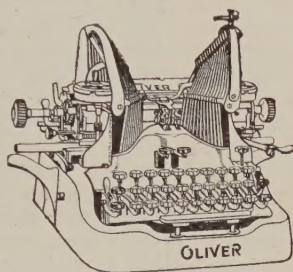
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